United Nations S/PRST/2000/32

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 November 2000
English
Original: English/French/Russian

Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4221st meeting of the Security Council, held on 14 November 2000, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Georgia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, of 25 October 2000 (S/2000/1023).

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to enhance contacts at all levels between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, in close cooperation with the Russian Federation, in its capacity as facilitator, the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It notes with appreciation the expansion of such contacts, which resulted recently in a series of meetings and steps towards the implementation of concrete cooperation projects between the two sides. It notes the holding of the 11th session of the Coordinating Council and urges further reinvigoration of this mechanism. It welcomes the readiness of the Government of Ukraine to host the third meeting on confidence-building measures in Yalta at the end of November and notes the important contribution a successful conference held in a timely fashion would make to the peace process.

"The Security Council notes with deep concern, however, the continued failure of the parties to achieve a comprehensive political settlement, which includes a settlement of the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia. It calls upon the parties, in particular the Abkhaz side, to undertake immediate efforts to move beyond the impasse and urges them to spare no efforts in order to achieve substantive progress without further delay. In this regard, it strongly supports the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, undertaken with the support of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, to address the issue of the future constitutional status of Abkhazia and, in particular, his intention to submit, in the near future, a draft paper containing proposals to the parties on the question of the distribution of competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi as a basis for meaningful negotiations on that issue.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to agree upon and to take, in the nearest future, concrete steps towards implementing effective measures to

00-74656 (E) 141100

guarantee the security of the refugees and internally displaced persons who exercise their unconditional right to return to their homes. In particular, the undefined and insecure status of spontaneous returnees to the Gali district is a matter that must be addressed urgently. The Council therefore urges the parties to engage in genuine negotiations to resolve concrete aspects of the matter and not to link this issue to political matters. In this regard, it joins the Secretary-General in encouraging the Abkhaz side to muster the requisite political will to resolve the problem of Georgian language education in the schools of the district, as well as to find the resources that those schools need, which the Secretary-General notes may affect directly the magnitude of the seasonal migration in the area.

"The Security Council welcomes the achievements reached within the framework of the policy implemented by the Government of Georgia, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Bank, aimed at ensuring that the internally displaced persons enjoy their right to be treated in the same manner as all other Georgian citizens.

"The Security Council notes that the situation on the ground in the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) area of responsibility has remained generally calm although unstable during the reporting period. It welcomes all efforts which have been undertaken, in particular by the Special Representative, with a view to alleviating tensions and increasing confidence between the parties. It urges the parties to cooperate closely in combating crime and improving the work of their respective law enforcement agencies.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the murder of Mr. Zurab Achba, legal assistant to the United Nations Human Rights Office in Sukhumi, recalls the commitment of the Abkhaz side to keep UNOMIG fully informed on the course of the investigation into this crime, and urges the Abkhaz side to shed light on this matter. It also deplores abductions of United Nations and humanitarian personnel. In this context, the Council recalls the relevant principles contained in the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel adopted on 9 December 1994 and the statement of its President of 10 February 2000 (S/PRST/2000/4). It calls on the parties to refrain from any actions which could increase tensions on the ground and to ensure the safety of UNOMIG personnel.

"The Security Council welcomes the contribution that UNOMIG and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Peacekeeping Force) continue to make in stabilizing the situation in the zone of conflict, notes that the working relationship between UNOMIG and the CIS Peacekeeping Force has remained close, and stresses the importance of continuing and increasingly active cooperation and coordination between them in the performance of their respective mandates. It calls on the parties to observe their obligations to prevent acts that violate the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of May 1994 (S/1994/583, annex 1) and could pose a threat to the life and security of UNOMIG, CIS Peacekeeping Force and other international personnel."